Mobilising Local Capacity for Security and Peacebuilding: Community Development Committees in PostConflict Warri, Delta State, Nigeria

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Introduction

As in other pans of the Niger Delta region, there has been a history of inter-ethnic violent conflicts among some of the ethnic nationalities in Delta state, South-South Nigeria, especially the Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo of Warri area. The conflicts - which pre-date colonial times and had robust historical and cultural roots, were fueled and sustained by disputes over land, farming and fishing rights, boundary delineations and recently the deposit and benefits from crude oil resources (DSTC Report, 2009). What, from historical perspective, appear to be the evidence of the foremost violent clashes between the Urhobo and Itsekiri in parts of Urhobo hinterlands occurred in 1952, 1977 and 1993. Perhaps the most violent conflict erupted in 1997, when the headquarters of Warri South-West Local Government Council was relocated from Ogbe-Ijoh (an Ijaw town) to Ogidigben (an Itsekiri town). The conflict spread beyond Warri South-West (LGC) to the two other local government areas within Warri. It was reported that over 3000 lives were lost, thousands of residents displaced and property worth several millions of naira destroyed.

A major factor that has sustained the intractable inter-ethnic conflicts in the Warri area has been under-development, marked by gross paucity of all forms of infrastructure, increasing poverty, unabated unemployment, and a steep decline in people's standards of living. Consequently, general grievance culture and structure started to grow in the communities, especially amongst the youths. And, as frustrations mount, inter-ethnic conflicts escalated, leading further to violent agitations, militancy, piracy, acts of vandalism of public assets, extortion and kidnapping of persons under conditions close to anarchy.

There is a consensus amongst peace and conflict practitioners, analysts, theorists and scholars of social conflict on the functionality of conflict. For them, its violent and destructive prevalence is a precursor to social change and serves as a motivating force for

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peacebuilding. For instances, the Delta State Development Administration and Committee Law 2004, which established Community Development Department (CDD), Centres and Committees (CDCs), is a consequent of the Warri conflict. It was designed as a conflict management and transformation framework for a proactive socio-political and economic development and recovery with the intent of addressing the root causes of the conflict in Warri.

This study argues, without prejudice that the issues in the Warri conflict are predominantly constitutional and simply beyond the competence of the civil society. It is in this sense that the James Ibon administration felt that one major way to assuage the grievances of the communities and to restore peace in the Warri conflict area was by improving infrastructure, providing employment, raising the people's standards of living and bringing governance much closer to the grassroots. Since the Nigerian Constitution does not confer on States the power to create local government areas, it decided, after due consultations, to create along ethnic divides, 12 Community Development Committees/Centres for "people sharing or having ethnic or linguistic association or other indigenous ties in the Warri area" (CDC Law, 2004), which were the theatres of ethnic conflict. The territorialism of government thought and practice necessitated the idea of communities as governable spaces (Watt 2004:4). It is in this sense that I want to think about the Development Centre in Warri conflict area as governable space that provide opportunity for Government to map peacebuilding structures through a cluster of ethnic communities for service delivery to the citizenry.

The spectrum of violent conflicts in Warn is as a result of the renewed quest and agitation for exclusive ethnic local government councils for the Ijaw and Urhobo speaking people of Warri. The Delta State government is aware of the constitutional complexity in creating new Local Government Council by the provisions of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Yet, in spite of the constitutional limitations, it was faced with the challenges of bringing development as near to the people as possible. One strategic measure to overcome these aforementioned challenges was the establishment of development centres within the existing local government areas with a view to focusing on political participation and directing special development efforts to douse tension, mutual hostility and build peace in the Warri conflict area. As Iain Atack (2004:22) suggests, "they need to acquire the capacity and the institutions to deal with conflict non-violently". It is against this backdrop that the Delta State Government charged the State legislature to nudge an instrument of development administration to ensure that such development centres were established in communities. In this sense, the CDCs, are without ambiguity, constitute a peacebuilding measure designed in "search for a model of governance and social relations that enables all groups in society to deal equitably and creatively with conflict" (Lerche, 2000:74) and thereby address the root causes of the Warri conflict.

The challenges of societies emerging from ethnic conflicts are infinitely more difficult
and complex than normal development processes (Stiefel, 2001:265). Though, the situations of a society emerging from conflict are almost always the same, there is no absolute blue print or mechanism for rebuilding post conflict societies (Stiefel, 2001:268). Therefore, it is often daunting to design a blue print for tackling the many challenges because each case is peculiar. Thus, it is difficult to replicate policies or processes of what proved successful at one time in a different situation. Generally, the principles of reconstruction, rehabilitation and reintegration for post conflict peacebuilding activities may serve as guidelines about priorities but distinct methods of approach must be formulated and adopted for each case. Therefore, concrete policy response to specific rebuilding and security challenges must be articulated and defined anew in consonance with socio-economic and political realities (Stiefel, 2001:268).

The data for this work was first collected in 2007, within the context of conflict transformation and focused on six selected CDCs with two centres representing each of the three conflicting ethnic groups in Warri area. A later visit to all CDCs as part of a study tour by the Delta State Technical Committee on the Niger Delta with the mandate to "recommend ways to strengthening existing institutions such as ... Community Development Department (CDD) to enable them function actively and more meaningfully in the development agenda of the Niger Delta" (DSTC TOR) provided an opportunity in 2009, to collect more data through participant’s observation and personal interviews.

Conceptual Discourse

The conceptual framework of the CDC by the Delta State Government is entrenched in the principles of ethnicity through community participation. Otite (1990:17) defined ethnicity as "categories of people characterised by cultural criteria of symbols including language, value systems and normative behavior, and whose members are anchored in a particular part of the new state territory". Although, this definition has been described as restrictive and negative of ethnicity (Imobighe, 2003:17), it is very apt in the context of the CDC framework. He further asserted that ethnicity has the properties of common group consciousness, identity and group exclusiveness on the basis of which social discriminations are made. Paradoxically, the dysfunctional attributes of ethnicity as espoused by existing literature, however, appear to serve a significant positive interest as found in the CDC framework. Indubitably, it underscored the strategic intent of deepening and extending the principle and practice of participatory development for accelerated grassroot development through a given operational area. The delineation of the CDC in Warn conflict area along ethnic lines appears to ignore the inherent negativistic potential identified in some existing literature. Rather, it does strategically invoke the peculiar advantages and leverage on its essence to build sustainable peace and security along a cluster of ethnic communities in a post conflict Warn area.

Ethnicity is germane to distinct group consciousness and identity which underscores group exclusiveness that encourages social
discrimination (Otite, 1990:62) The negative properties of ethnicity have shown that ethnic exclusiveness is not a normal process of interaction (Imobighe, 2003:17) in inter communal relations. Nevertheless, contemporary developments in the socio-economic reality of Nigeria, has shown that the elites have often used it to propel ethnic sentiments in order to drive their selfish interest in the polity. The conflict dynamics of Warri area is characterised by strong group mobilisation in the form of ethnic and communal identity over other factors. It is in this sense that Rotimi Suberu (1999) observes that "...new ethnic minority elite are adept at giving coherent expressions to communal grievances and mobilise their communities in response to changing political development and opportunity" (cited in Bassey, 2002:24). Consequently, it underscore the notion that inter-communal relations within the larger inter ethnic engagements have consistently failed to leverage on the creative potentials of ethnicity rather it has become a major conflict driver in Nigeria. Two points need to be made here: First, the conflict between the tripartite ethnic groups (Ijaw, Itsekiri and Urhobo) in Warri is essentially resource, territorial or land conflict, involving disagreement over ownership and political control of Warn and cannot be classified as strictly ethnic, in spite of the fact that ethnicity has often been identified as a major factor in the conflict dynamics. Second, economic activities in the area does not seems to foster inter-ethnic relations or integration, unlike elsewhere in Nigeria, where daily domestic economic needs and interactions appears to foster and encourage harmonious inter ethnic relations and interactions through business transactions. This is because in the Niger Delta with particular reference to the Warn conflict area, the community is alienated from the mainstream operations of the petrodollar economy propelled by the crude oil exploration of multinational oil companies and superintended by a rentier state. Instead it has encouraged some form of community identity and ownership as host or oil bearing community with rights to contracts, development, contact employment, etc.

Ethnic identity is a conscious manifestation of affiliation to a distinct socio-cultural group to which one share some characteristic or affinity to a particular community, who are often faced with challenges of greater discrimination but determined to maintain self and group esteem. Contrary to held negativistic perception of ethnic identity as a conflict driver in relation to vulnerability to negative outcomes, awakening individual sensitivity to group discrimination, violent behavior as a result of negative images of one's ethnic group, numerous studies have identified positive outcomes inherent with ethnic identities. According to Ortiz and Santos (2010), a sense of ethnic identity generates self esteem, improved mental health, decreased self-destructive behavior and greater academic achievements.

The establishment of the CDD/CDC is an implicit explanation to a significant degree the relationship between ethnic identity and conflict triggers. Which perhaps also underscore the dysfunctional thesis "ethnicity per se is a conflict generating phenomenon" (Imobighe, 2003:16) espouses in some literature on ethnicity and conflict. Contrary
to the apprehension that separate administrative units along ethnic divide could be used to mobilise ethnic groups for attack, conflict escalation as well as to sustain animosity especially when they have nothing in common and limited interactions. The CDCs, rather than encourage separatist agitation, does facilitates accommodation to enhance peacebuilding for communal and ethnic integration. Two aspect of creating separate administrative unit impinged on the solution being proffered for solving the ethnic conflict in Warn. First, there is a general consensus by social theorists that separate administrative units such as the CDCs with the pattern of separate settlement in Warn would encourage group cohesion and mobilisation which can be dysfunctional to social cohesion. The second aspect is the school of thought that contend that since the different groups cannot live together peacefully under a common administrative unit, let them live apart in different community units as a prize for peace. The thesis of separation when hinged on the functionality of CDCs presupposes that accommodation is still possible after separation and need not impede cooperation. In this sense, the statutory functions of the CDC underscores Vivien Erasmus's definition of community mobilisation, as a means of tapping into the knowledge and resources of the local community and fostering a spirit of community ownership (2001:247).

Richard Cawley (1989) defines community as a common ground for engaging persons, groups and organisation (Cawley, 1989:101). It is in this sense that community mobilisation is a way of working toward the attainment of a goal through community based solutions. The term community has carried a range of senses denoting actual groups and connoting specific qualities of tradition and customs of social relationship in contrast to the formal properties of state with its own style of politics distinct ensemble of the national or local politics in terms of community participation and organisation (Watts, 2004:1). The new practices of the state, as Mitchell Dean (1999:16 cited in Watts, 2004) says, shape human conduct by working through our desires, aspirations, interest and beliefs for definite but shifting ends.

In many respect, the idea of community and academic discourse of its place in the wider tapestry of peacebuilding reflects community development and community mobilisation. Community development as elucidated by Jones and Silva (1991) transcend beyond the ordinary material resource development but focuses on integrated model of community development that include problem solving, community building and system intervention (Jones and Silva, 1991, cited in Wise et al, 1998:1). In this sense, the CDC, as integrated approach assesses the problem, goes on to build community capacity, and importantly addresses the problems of advancement; betterment; capacity building; empowerment; enhancement and nurturing (Wise, 1998:1). Related to the above, Maser's definition of community development may be more apt to the context of our study "the capacity of people to work collectively in addressing the common interest" (Maser, 1997, cited in Wise, 1998:2).

Thus, community mobilisation has become a central tenet endorsed as one of the structural intervention strategies that drive
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The objective of community mobilisation, according to Erasmus, is to: "create dialogue; promote structures and systems for involvement of community in planning, management, implementation, etc. optimal utilisation of existing community resources; ensure cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders; advance community empowerment and ownership; and to resolve conflicts and grievances" (Erasmus, 2001:249). In this sense, the CDCs evolved the concept of increasing contact, harmonious inter-ethnic relations to whittle down mistrust and animosity by sharing the same basic institutions (CDD) that galvanise cooperation for the development of their various communities. The CDC is considered as a constructive conflict transformation and peacebuilding agent and process of creating the conditions which engendered effective co-operative problem solving process. For instance, the CDC members’ forum which meets at the CDD level is often used to brainstorm and build synergy to facilitate joint problem solving in relation to each CDC activities, welfare, and remuneration of members. This process has engendering organic solidarity, re-orientation of values, goals and opportunity for social interactions. The CDC framework is an attempt to positively and strategically mainstream group exclusivity to map conflict transformation and peacebuilding measures in a post conflict society. In this sense, the CDC framework is tapping into the positive horizon of ethnicity as a human existential necessity with sound understanding of the conflict dynamics based on ethnic hostility and animosity against the backdrop of structural and relational peacebuilding in a post conflict environment. More importantly, the CDCs are designed to muster a creative strategy of participatory and integrative framework through community mobilisation for security and peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding and Security in Postconflict Warri

Community mobilisation by the CDCs has been endorsed as one intervention strategies through legislation to improve the conflict environment, and has thus become a pivot on which the wheel of peacebuilding revolves in
the Warri area. Again, as a political process of transformation, the CDC framework adopt a multifaceted approach covering security, political, social and economic dimension to articulate a seamless link between development and peacebuilding. As Manuela Leonhardt (2000) rightly observed "it is important to link development and peace initiatives with each other so that they simultaneously address the material conditions of -violence (lack of opportunities) and empower people to resolve their conflicts peacefully (Leonhardt, 2000:242). The effectiveness of CDCs in addressing peacebuilding and security issues in their respective centers is based on the community development activities.

An evaluation of the CDC from peacebuilding perspective shows that since 2005 when the CDCs were inaugurated and established, community mobilisation for peacebuilding was modestly achieved. Their individual and respective programmes have scaled up community mobilisation and increase the incidents of non violent approach to issues of provocation which would have hitherto been addressed through violent means. However, the degree of success varies from CDC to CDC, and community to community. This is because each CDC sets up its own objectives often derived from the overall goal of the CDC framework to execute its projects, schemes and programmes in relation to the specific needs, priorities, and resources available to the community. These variations provide opportunity to examine how specific individual (CDC) project, initiative and activity translate to success of the overall objectives of community mobilisation for peacebuilding, as well as factors that determine relative success of the peace process. In this sense, it enhances the process of creating sustainable peace through community mobilisation for conflict prevention, escalation and relapsing into violence at the various centres while identifying factor that contribute to and work against the mobilisation process.

The CDC framework is in tandem with the concept of post conflict peacebuilding introduced by former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who, in his famous *Agenda for Peace* defines post-conflict peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:21). The process of transformation did not come to an end with termination of hostilities between the ethnic groups. As we have seen, the CDC continued through with peacebuilding and security activities which are essential ingredient for post conflict rebuilding. The capacity of the CDCs in peacebuilding perspective as a form of conflict resolution or transformation reflects the genuine efforts by government to strengthen the prospects for internal peace and decrease the likelihood of violent conflict. Thus, the CDCs are vigorously poised to fulfill the overarching goal of peacebuilding which is to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence" (Small, 2001:78). The CDCs, more than any previous government intervention at conflict management or peacebuilding in the Warri area have shown more commitment to address the root causes, fear, frustration, threat and
minority orientation. In the same way, the CDC activities underpin the group dynamics as identified in the CDC statutory function of mobilising the people for "co-operative farming or other suitable occupation and development through self help projects in the area education, health, social amenities, infrastructural development and maintenance" (CDC Law 2004: section 12).

As Lederach rightly observed, "the grassroots represent the masses, the base of the society. Life at this level is characterised, particularly in setting of protracted conflict and war, by a survival mentality" (Lederach, 2001:149). Thus, a key strategy in peacebuilding approaches at this level is based on the capacity to provide for the existential needs of the various ethnic communities through empowerment and by the leadership. Though, some respondents especially those who could not eke out a living argued that the CDC has not adequately provided through its compensation and resettlement of displaced person, employment and empowerment scheme for the existential needs which occurred from damages and loss suffered due to the ethnic conflict. Nevertheless, the researcher discovered that since the establishment of the CDCs and the improved security situation, most victims have returned to their communities. For instance, the Benin River CDC resettled eighteen (18) families who fled their communities at the wake of Ijaw invasion of Jakpa, Ewoleba, Ekerkporo and others. At Orere CDC, the Committee collaborated with the Local Education Authority to reopen the school and mandated teachers to return to the community though the response was initially poor but the CDC introduced a monthly stipend to motivate the teachers posted to the community. Similarly, the Ode-Itsekiri CDC provided notebooks and teaching aids to some selected schools and collaborated with an NGO and Ministry of Education to renovate and equip the only existing Erejuwa II Grammar School at Ode-Itsekiri.

Beyond this, the CDCs adopted several strategic practical measures to solve the problems of development in the Warn conflict area in terms of human capital and community infrastructure. For instance, the Agbarha CDC, built and staffed a Health Centre at Ogunu, facilitated projects with Delta State Government, and collaborated with the member representing Warri Constituency II in Delta State House of Assembly to embark on two water projects worth two million, five hundred thousand Naira (N2.5m) each at Oteghele and Okpokiti communities. In addition, the Centre established a primary school at Oteghele - a riverine Urhobo community, counterpart funding of Health Centre and bore-hole water project at Okpokiti another Urhobo riverine community with MPP3, an International Non-governmental Organisation (NGO). The projects executed by all CDCs are not limited to these. Space will not permit us to mention all in this volume. The point to make here is, Government release of N25 million to each CDC, specifically for the provision of transportation facilities have scaled up development activities, presence of governance and ultimately peacebuilding outcomes.

Security

Security is essentially important in societies
emerging from conflict therefore, establishing sustainable security is considered the pre-requisite for post-conflict peacebuilding (Tschingi, 2004:9). The dominant security agenda of CDC framework is based on two prongs: (1) community security and by extension state oriented (2) human security. In this context, the policy thrust promotes human security along community/state oriented security with a robust understanding to deal with issues of insecurity through an integrated community approach to avert relapse into conflict. It is in this sense that Richmond (2007:465) argues that human security improves security but also complicates our understanding of what cause insecurity. Human security as a people oriented approach assumed prominence as way to capture the nexus between development and peace (Uvin, 2002:17). Though the nexus is a complex, but indisputable one (Neethling, 2005:35 an integrated peacbuilding approaches in support of conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict reconstruction deal with theoretical and practical perspective of security and development issue is through

One objective of the CDC is to promote community role in peacebuilding through community mobilisation and participation to promote cooperation and development at community level to enhance security. Some of the CDCs have been playing commendable roles in conflict mediation, resolution and peacebuilding, thereby helping to reduce the level of social tension in their areas. For instance, the Benin River CDC, mediated peace and resolved the conflict between Ugbege and Ebiaghan communities over census matters, constituted security commit lees, recruited and mobilise youth guards for security patrol of oil installations and to gather intelligence report with a view to nipping ye >uth restiveness in the bud and to protect oil installation and flow-stations. Similarly, Koko/ Abigborodo CDC inaugurated a youth vanguard to monitor and protect oil pipelines from vandahsation or disruption of exploration activities in communities and environs around Dibie Oil-field.

The Ogidigben/Ugborodo CDC constituted Peace and Security Committee, this Committee is saddled with the responsibility to promote peace and security. Consequently, this initiative has minimised the cases of kidnap, piracy and inter and intra-communal clashes. The Ode/Tsekin CDC collaborates with various security operatives to create a synergy for effective security and peacebuilding outcomes in the area. It also intervened in community youth leadership conflicts and resolved ten cases of youth leadership tussles in the various communities such as Obodo, Ode-Itsekin, Omadmo, Ugbede, among others. Also, the Agbarha CDC resolved several conflicts, they include, conflicts between Igbudu community and Globestar Company (multinational company); Igbudu youths and Anglican Church, Igbudu; Otovwodo (Agbassa) youths and those working on Olu's building as well as between Omadinor (Itsekiri) community and Ukpokiti (Urhobo) community.

**Mobilising Local Capacity for Security and Peacebuilding**

Two critical components identified and examined in this study of mobilising local
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Leadership in Peacebuilding

Leadership in peacebuilding is one of the five clusters of the critical requirements of peacebuilding blocks identified in peace research literature (Reychler and Stellamans, 2004). Lederach (2001) identifies 3 levels of leadership in peacebuilding in conflict prone society:

1. Top-Level Leadership comprises of key political and military leaders in the conflict and are highly visible

2. Middle-Range Leadership - include persons who function in leadership positions within their profession not political or military.

3. Grassroots Leadership include people who are involved in local communities such as the members of CDC.

Leadership is the art, the application of person qualities, knowledge, skills and behaviour to influence and inspire others to succeed (Robison, 2005). Riggio (2000:340) defines leadership as the" ability to direct a group toward the attainment of goals". The leadership dimension in the debate on peacebuilding and security in post conflict societies identified by the UN Secretary-General in his 2009 report stresses the importance of process ownership as a national challenge and responsibility to create a sense of ownership around a common vision (Doss, 2011). Leadership in peacebuilding focuses on the aspects of positive skills, attitudes and behaviours around civic involvement in setting and achieving community objectives. The objectives of leadership in peacebuilding is to ensure optimal utilisation of existing community resources and assets of the local people to create a better community through cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders; advance community empowerment and ownership; and to resolve conflicts and grievances" (Erasmus, 2001:249)

The importance of the leadership role in relation to community mobilisation, as both a stabilising catalyst and a driver of the peace process is essentially critical. The members of CDCs are transitional administrators drawn from a wide spectrum of concerned and influential community members with a strong
burden to pool community resources and shared goals in order to objectify visible community efforts. The members of each Development Committee represent a variety of interests including a representative of a recognised ruler to reflect the sectoral character of the area. The Community Development Committee (CDC) in its initial composition and activities is overwhelmingly male with only one female member until Hon. (Mrs.) Fanti Wareyai was appointed Chairman in 2009, to replace Mr. George Tumimmi. This being a male oriented world, it is infused with traditionally masculine value and behaviour - rationality, logic, stoicism, power orientation, crisis management, competition, aggressiveness and adversarial thinking with male language. The quality of their action (courage and commitment to the needs of the community) and integrity of their intent as well as the capacity to: motivate, direct articulate and instill a sense of common direction and purpose; and to distil, reflect and project unifying symbols and cultural values (Gurstein, 1999) during the conflict and peace process is an important factor in the selection process and not necessarily because they were set out to be community leaders. As Gurstein explains, the requirement of a leader in the multinational context is similar in many ways to those required of a leader in any other military context.

The CDC is about community service and most of the members have truly unselfish motivation to protect, preserve and promote the culture heritage and seek the highest good for their community. Borrowing from John Paul Lederach, "they also have an expert knowledge of local politics and know on face-to-face basis the local leaders of the government and its adversaries" (Lederach, 2001:149). In this sense, the credibility, knowledge of community resources and challenges, visibility and ability to influence are critical components of community mobilisation. The CDCs are structured along bureaucratic centralised style of administration different from the traditional leadership style found in the grassroots communities and in many instances posed some salient dilemmas and frustrations to most CDC leadership.

The coordination of CDC activities by the CDD in the office of Governor, serve as an example of strategic and creative utilisation of ethnicity - communal based collaborative efforts to generate peacebuilding properties such as mutual respect, trust, open communication among members at the leadership level for joint problem solving in relation to conflict issues, security challenges and peacebuilding measures. The constant interaction of CDC chairmen at the CDD level is required to maintain a level of effectiveness - create a sense of belonging and accountability to a common authority to which members owed a perceived responsibility. Such frequent and regular meetings facilitated by the CDD were loosely community mobilisation strategies for open communication and to maintain a sense of closeness to each CDC.

To this end, the CDD seeks to avoid the breakdown of peaceful conditions and when it does, become a platform to galvanise efforts at peacemaking and peacekeeping. One of such instance is; the CDD convened a meeting on 24 April, 2006, at the instance of the Director General to resolve and douse tension as a result
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of a statute of a king erected on government playground around Upper Erejuwa within the jurisdiction of Okere-Urhobo CDC, considered to be an affront from Itsekiris. Prior to the meeting, the leadership of both Okere-Itsekiri and Okere-Urhobo were directed to restrain members of their communities from acts capable of exacerbating violent conflict. The DG disclosed at the meeting that the statute was a beautification project of Warn by the Delta State Ministry of Arts, Culture and Tourism.

At the outset, to gain members commitment to the entire peace process and as major drivers of community based initiatives aimed at improving the lives of the people, CDC members participated in a training workshop on transformational leadership, to enhance a collective understanding of community mobilisation focused on peacebuilding outcomes and non-violent approaches to community issues. Ostensibly, it was designed to foster a dramatic shift by enhancing the individual and community development capacity to ensure sustainability of the peace process.

Empowerment Programmes

The effectiveness of peacebuilding outcomes in post conflict societies through community mobilisation are often measured with development indicators in relation to social change in the areas of health and socio-economic issues of poor local populations which is largely addressed through empowerment. To this end, youth and women empowerment programmes is a major strategy for effective community mobilisation for peacebuilding. Empowerment is one of the strategies adopted by the CDC framework as human capital development rr. overcome the disadvantaged postic people through access to social entitlements, financial credit and economic opportunities to address their vulnerability to violence and aggression. Ultimately, the various strategies aimed at collective empowerment are to adequately address personal inabilities for social transformation. Accordingly, community mobilisation through empowerment creates a sense of self-esteem, confidence, and consciousness which is essential to develop collective identity, trust and mutual support as the basis for collective action (Blanchard et al, 2013: 3). Undertaking youth and women empowerment programmes, the CDCs have tried to develop the capacity of a strategic force and group in the community to address issues relating macro-level social-economic challenges that often pose structural barriers to community development and peacebuilding.

In the operations of the CDCs, responsibilities were shared among members, to enable them tap the unique strength and capacities of community members through multifaceted ways to build local capacities for peacebuilding. The operating principle is located in the various activities of skill acquisition, human capital development, and infrastructural development to improve the standard of living and on health related systems to positively impact on the peacebuilding. Strategically, the various means adopted to addressing social change include advocacy and organising groups along socio-economic imperative, such as cooperative society - a formation of economic interest unit to access micro credit facilities/scheme in accordance with the strengths, resources and
competencies of community members.

On local capacity development, the Benin River CDC trained 2 youths each from 5 communities in skill acquisition in welding, sewing and hairdressing and sponsored a female and male youth each from 10 communities to participate in HIV/AIDS awareness workshop at Koko. In addition, it undertook enlightenment campaigns on the inherent dangers and risks involved in pipeline vandalism, when the incidence of pipeline vandalism was rife nation-wide.

Failures of CDC to Mobilise Local Capacity for Peacebuilding

The CDC framework to mobilise local capacity for peacebuilding has failed on a number of counts to mobilise. Firstly, the likelihood that societies emerging from violent conflict could relapse into violence may not be indubitable as Ijaw militant youths were reported to have attacked Itsekiri creek communities in Warri North Council Area, unleashing terror and completely sacking Ajamita, Udo, Gbokoda, Obaghoro and Ayerode-Zion on the Benin River axis. The attack was precipitated on the imminent fear that the Egbema people would be denied the position of the Chairman in the forth-coming local council elections. The Egbema militant youths alleged complete neglect, political imbalance and marginalisation in terms of political and civil service appointments in spite of the Ijaw overwhelming majority. On the contrary, government security report after convening a security meeting with major stakeholders from both ethnic groups concluded that the attack was a form of transferred aggression from kidnappers and oil thieves after the military Joint Task Force (JTF) raided a militant camp located at Adagbarase and Itagbene communities. The point to emphasise is that the communities behind the recent violent attack are locate in Egbema Development Committee, the only CDC where the researcher during the visit to CDC in 2009, witnessed a group of protesting elders, leaders, youth and women particularly against the Chairman. For one thing, the recent attacks can be attributed to a combination of the dynamism of the Warri conflict and leadership failure to cultivate and develop cordial relations, germane to community mobilisation for peacebuilding.

Secondly, the standard of living in these communities is low because the people are predominately unemployed and poor. They are prone to diseases and poor health conditions because of poor hygiene and sanitation. The CDCs possess the desire and human willingness to work, yet there are inherent constraints such as dearth of funds and inadequate funding mechanism, which inhibit performance to address the sundry issues of health conditions, ecological and environmental problem, resettling displaced persons, organised the people into formations to access micro-credits but no funds for disbursement, and inability to fund development projects to bring about the anticipated social change. Consequently, the CDC has not been able to adequately articulate the insecurity challenges arising from youth unemployment and increasing level of militancy and oil theft.

Thirdly, related to the above is human and material resource mobilisation, both are essential component of community
mobilisation. The CDCs have failed to mobilise the political elite and a variety of community member/specialists resident in urban centers, such as lawyers, economist, medical practitioners, educators and faith-based organisation to contribute their expertise for the common good of all and to support peacebuilding projects.

**Conclusion**

As a public institutional response to the "Warri conflict" with its historical and geopolitical dimensions, the establishment of the CDD and CDCs scheme in 2005, and their functionality up-to-date are highly commended. They have generated enormous fruits of peacebuilding and social stability as well as community confidence in inter-ethnic co-existence unknown in recent times in the pre-CDC era. The CDC is an ingenious scheme to overcome the constitutional limitations of States on creation of new local government areas in the country. The shortfalls and difficulties of the scheme, notwithstanding, the sad experience of the inter-ethnic conflict rooted in the Warri local government areas (the communities, society and economy), which scared away investments, business activities and even normal livelihood of communities, ordinary citizens and families, has become a phenomenon of the past. Peace and stability are not quantifiable commodities. The peace of the Warri area in contemporary times is a good measure, a product of the CDC scheme, among other social and institutional forces which might have contributed their quota to this benefit of governance.

The Warri metropolitan formation and conurbation are, again, experiencing increasing socio-economic activities, while the districts, streets, nook and crannies of the township which were like battle-field at the peak of the conflict, are now calm. The people and visitors have begun to regain confidence in them-selves and in one another, and live in peace and harmony. My interactions with officials of the CDD, members of CDC, and respondents to my peacebuilding survey construct underscore the peace within the area since the inauguration in 2005.

The study confirms not only the fact that as against the era of intractable ethnic conflicts, peace has returned to the area through the CDCs message of peacebuilding, but also the activities of the CDCs are the first experience of governance at the grassroots especially in the creek-based CDCs. The CDCs were created as fundamental instruments to assist in resolving the communal conflicts, they have impacted positively in generating peace and security among the people and communities, and also confidence and legitimacy in government. Therefore, the CDC structure, in my strong opinion should be supported to sustain and consolidate the success in peacebuilding. In this sense, the activities and operations of the CDCs should be adequately funded by government and donor agencies to enable them confront the challenges of peacebuilding. In this sense funding through a multi-donor trust fund mechanism with pre-committed financing by multinationals beyond collaboration should be introduced.

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